

MEN WATCH FOOTBALL BECAUSE THEY ARE LONELY FOR OTHER MEN

They would like to wear real uniforms. They would like to get knocked down, then get up and pat each other on the ass. They would like to look into the stands and imagine women there who admire prowess and guts, women who might meet them at the players' gate afterwards, who might give them the time of their lives and then vanish.

But they are just as happy trotting into the locker room. They like to be fussed over by the trainer and coach. They like to see the other guys horsing around in their towels.

They are not homosexual. They do not understand homosexuality. They do not like their own bodies and cannot imagine caressing another one.

It is the locker room where no one is ashamed of the beer gut, the missing teeth, the bald spot. At home they spend hours sucking it in, combing it over.

Women care what men look like though they are often mean about beauty in their sisters. Looks are not so important to men. If the quarterback is a god they say, "It's not his fault. Can he help it if he's good looking?"

Men worry about their looks because they solicit their wives for sex and they know women prefer handsome devils. Too, they believe that women do not like sex and -- being mothers -- probably should not. They know women like to be wooed and regularly invest in candles and champagne.

But nearly every man knows the difference between his idea of a perfect evening and his wife's. He wants to watch her undress, watch her get her nipples hard, then fuck her fast. He knows she wants to wash her face and kiss goodnight saying, "Thank you, honey," which means thank you for not ruining it with that thing.

Men watch football because they would like to live and work with forty other men forever. They would like to kick ass and get kicked. They would like

to have injuries X-rayed and reported in the papers. They hate taking Maalox and Excedrin. They hate the suppository.

Men watch football because when the end drops it or the tackle fucks up, the team will eventually forget. Until then, he sits in splendid isolation, head in hands on nationwide t.v. Or he can compensate by snaring the winning pass, decking the panzer back. At home no one seems to forget. Last night's, last week's, last month's mistakes are worse than game films. Chances for a big play are small to nil.

Men watch football because it reminds them of what might have been. Young men think if it hadn't been for some bad breaks they could out-pussy Namath. Older men are not so sanguine. They do not feel if the phone rang they could go in. They cannot always handle the longing of every Schlitz, dolor of chip and Frito much less a bullet from some howitzer-armed rookie.

But they can watch the veterans, relentless specialists coming in in every clutch, splitting the uprights, penetrating the zone, lean and mean and deep in their 40's, grey at the temples but probably more young stuff than they can handle and \$90,000.00 a yr., too.

Well, hell. It's not their fault.

IN SOUTH AMERICA ON BUSINESS HE DOES
SOMETHING HE IS ASHAMED OF YET ON THE
WAY HOME DREAMS OF IT AGAIN AND AGAIN

He liked the whores in Guatemala City. He liked their coloring books and dirty feet. When he paid, the American dollars shook like leaves.

The stewardess wakes him again, "It's just a dream," she says. He sees décolletage. He looks away: not that, not now. Too close to home, the wife, the little girl.